

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 HEW-08 NIC-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06

SIL-01 DRC-01 /129 W

----- 056228

R 221530Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1656

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 1252

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH DEMOCRACY FUMBLES ALONG OR BUTTON, BUTTON,
WHO'S GOT THE BUTTON

SUMMARY: THANKS TO ONE MAVERICK WHO BOLTED PARTY AND
THREE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WHO COULD NOT OPERATE PUSH-
BUTTON VOTING SYSTEM PROPERLY, SWEDISH RIKSDAG HAS
AVOIDED TIE-VOTE AND NECESSITY OF GOING TO LOTTERY.
BUT IT HAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED PROBLEMS IN PRESENT
DEADLOCK. END SUMMARY.

1. MARCH 20 WAS THE DAY ON WHICH SWEDISH RIKSDAG
SHOULD HAVE HAD FIRST TIE VOTE IN THIS SESSION, THUS
FORCING IT TO RESORT TO LOTTERY. THANKS TO MAVERICK
LIBERAL RIKSDAGSMAN STEN SJOHOLM WHO AGAIN VIOLATED
PARTY DISCIPLINE AND ABSTAINED (SEE STOCKHOLM 742)
GOVERNMENT PREVAILED BY ONE VOTE ON A MINOR ISSUE OF
GOVERNMENT FISCAL PRACTICE. A BOURGEOIS LEADER, CON-
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SIDERABLY ANNOYED BY THE UNPREDICTABLE SJOHOLM, WAS

HEARD TO MUTTER, "NEXT THING WE CAN EXPECT IS TO SEE HIM STREAKING DOWN AISLE OF RIKSDAG."

2. NEXT DAY (MARCH 21) BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION, UNDAUNTED, AGAIN MANEUVERED FOR TIE VOTES ON TWO ISSUES. FIRST WAS BOURGEOIS PROPOSAL FOR DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE THAT GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE UNIVERSAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (AND THE COMMUNISTS) OPPOSED ON GROUNDS QUESTION NEEDED MORE STUDY. BUT, WHEN VOTING TALLY FLASHED ON BIG ELECTRONIC SCREEN IN RIKSDAG CHAMBER, SOCDEMS DISCOVERED MOTION HAD CARRIED BY ONE VOTE. SOCDEMS SAT IN SHOCKED SILENCE WHILE SPEAKER BANGED GAVEL, MAKING ACTION FINAL. SUBSEQUENT CHECK REVEALED THAT VOTE OF ONE SOCDEM LADY MEMBER, WHO HAD FAILED PRESS HER VOTING BUTTON HARD ENOUGH, HAD NOT REGISTERED.

3. SHORT TIME LATER ANOTHER BOURGEOIS PROPOSAL-TO MAKE GOVERNMENT PAY FOR WORKER TRAINING IN FACTORIES-CAME TO A VOTE. SOCDEMS AND COMMUNISTS AGAIN OPPOSED, HOLDING THAT COMPANIES AND NOT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PAY. AGAINST CERTAIN EXPECTATION OF TIE VOTE, SOCDEMS MEMBERS HAD PUSHED THE "YES" BUTTON INSTEAD OF THE "NO." THEY EXPLAINED THAT THE LONG SOCDEM HEGEMONY IN RIKSDAG HAD CONDITIONED THEM TO VOTE "YES" AUTOMATICALLY.

4. COMMENT: IN TEN WEEKS OF THIS DEADLOCKED RIKSDAG, SWEDEN'S LOTTERY SYSTEM FOR BREAKING TIE VOTES HAS NOT BEEN USED, BUT NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING. THIS WEEK'S FIASCOS HAVE PRODUCED GENERAL MERRIMENT AT RIKSDAG'S EXPENSE BUT THERE IS A SERIOUS SIDE TO THE JOKE-- DEADLOCK IN RIKSDAG IS PROVING TO BE MORE AND MORE OF A HINDRANCE TO "ORDERLY" GOVERNMENT, AND THIS ADDS TO PRESSURES FOR A NEW ELECTION WHICH WOULD AT LEAST CREATE A MAJORITY, HOWEVER SMALL.

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Message Attributes

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